



Econometric Analysis of Gender Presence and Performance of Women in the Workplace in Cameroon (Sub-Saharan Africa)

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Abstract:

This study research paper investigates how gender discrimination affects corporate performance in Cameroon. Data from the Cameroon Enterprise Survey in 2016 by the World Bank Group and data collected from March 6 to 23rd, 2023, in Douala and Yaoundé, as well as 757 managers' responses, were utilized. The analysis focused on three organizational levels: employees, management, and business ownership. This study used a mixed method of descriptive and econometric analysis. The results of this study revealed a positive and significant relationship between the presence of women in the workforce and performance. This result is attributed to the improvement in the performance of enterprises with appreciable participation of women in the workforce, management, and ownership levels, specifically in the tourism industry, arts and crafts, textiles, general merchandising, and distribution, which require less training and funding, which are the principal factors of discrimination against women and girls in Cameroon. Furthermore, the turnover of businesses owned and managed by women and those owned/operated by men shows successful growth compared to companies of similar sizes.

Keywords: gender equality, corporate performance, business. econometric analysis

Introduction

A growing emphasis on Corporate Social Responsibility (C.S.R.) highlights the professional equality between men and women in the corporate world. Owing to the complexity of the workplace, diversity and inclusion have been questioned. This study argues that gender equality has become a moral and strategic necessity for corporate competition. The compelling evidence from our research leaves no doubt about the strategic advantage that gender equality can bring to corporate performance. s

The International Labor Organization narrated in its Global Wage Report 2018/19 that women earn 20% less than men do globally (International Labor Organization, 2018). Moreover, women's labor force participation rate is 26.5 percent lower than men's. Women are underrepresented in C.E.O. (chief executive officer) positions and board seats despite several studies signifying a robust positive correlation between gender diversity in the corporate world (Taghizadeh-Hesary et al., 2019). This study further reinforces this correlation by highlighting the significant Impact of gender diversity on corporate performance.

Globalization has created genuine concern for interacting with organizations (businesses) and their environment. Corporate Social Responsibility has been the emphasis that brings to light the professional equality between men and women in the corporate world. Indeed, several empirical investigations, particularly in developing countries such as Cameroon, have highlighted the effects of gender equality through women's participation in the prosperity of businesses. Thus, gender equality is imperative for corporate competition. One study shows that if a company reduces obstacles to women's ascension in business, it will benefit growth, performance, and productivity (Burke & Davidson, 1994). Gender equality can be an economic and managerial issue beyond being a factor of social dynamism. There has been an increasing debate on the qualities of feminine behavior as a vector of collective performance in businesses. However, there has always been a stereotype that a man will earn for the family, and a woman, on the other hand, is expected to stay indoors looking after the family responsibilities. After a long struggle, women were considered only to look after the family.

Today, female entrepreneurs make up about one-third of the world's entrepreneurs; however, in Africa, the situation still needs to be more encouraging for female entrepreneurs than for men, considering the worse conditions in Cameroon. According to data, women constitute one-third of the world's workforce, about 46%, compared to 72% of men, according to the International Labour Organization (I.L.O.) 2016. In sub-Saharan Africa, there is a global gap of 17 percentage points between the participation rate in the active population of women and that of men, which are 53% and 70%, respectively (World Bank, 2015). In Cameroon, the results of the second General Census of Enterprises, known in French as Recensement Generale des entreprise 2^{eme} edition (RGE-2), conducted in 2016 by the National Institute of Statistics (I.N.S.), indicate that compared to men, women are still less likely to be employed in companies. In a country like Cameroon, with a female population of over 51%, only 43% of women are engaged in companies, and only 44% hold a permanent job. This difference in participation is also noticeable when examining business size. Cameroon, a patriarchal society, has a ratio of one woman to six men in large businesses and a ratio of one woman to two men in small and medium-sized enterprises. A look at entrepreneurship reveals more gender disparities in Cameroonian companies (62.8% of businesses are created by men compared to only 37.2% by women).

Regarding management, 57.3% of the companies are run by men and 42.7% by women. Gender attitudes and practices in Cameroon's labor market are rooted in the traditional patriarchal system. They are reinforced by modern legal and political instruments that limit women's economic advancement. Although the employment trends of women have improved (RGE2), the sociological, legal, and cultural burdens still relegate Cameroonian women to second place by reducing their activities, primarily to fulfill family commitments and maternity constraints. A solid cultural attachment is observed in these areas compared to urbanities due to the progressive enlightenment of females and the significant emergence of government policies; prejudices, traditions, and customs still limit women's employment in companies, their promotion to managerial positions, and even the ownership of startups and the creation of enterprises. Beyond these socio-cultural barriers are economic barriers, including lack of equity (in terms of training) and lack of access to institutional credit, severely limiting women's

entrepreneurship in Cameroon. These barriers amply testify to the persistence of disparities in participation by gender in the labor market in general and in business in Cameroon. For the proper functioning and participation of all Cameroonians in the economic development of Cameroon, it is essential to nurture and encourage potential without gender discrimination.

Government policies, prejudices, traditions, and customs limit women's employment in companies and promotion to managerial positions. Beyond these socio-cultural barriers are economic barriers, including a lack of equity and access to institutional credit, severely limiting women's entrepreneurship in Cameroon. These barriers amply testify to the persistence of disparities in participation by gender in the labor market in general and in business in Cameroon (I.M.F. Report, 2015).

Public authorities have made efforts in favor of gender equality and the advancement of women to achieve not only Millennium Development Goals 1 and 3 (M.D.G.s) but, more generally, Objectives 5 and 101 of the Sustainable Development Goals (S.D.G.s) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, aimed at ensuring equal opportunities between women and men in all sectors, particularly in the field of employment, despite a set of legal and regulatory mechanisms, consisting not only of national legislation but also of international and regional legal instruments aimed at promoting and protecting women's rights in the labor market and income-generating activities. Professional equality remains challenging for Cameroonian authorities, who continue developing strategies to encourage more women to participate in business. From this perspective, an action plan for the development of female entrepreneurship (PAN-DEV) will be published under the aegis of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family, known by its French acronym (MINPROFF) (Efogo & Timba, 2015), meaning *Ministere de Promotion de la femme et de la famille* created in 2004 to encourage and promote women's participation in the social, economic, and political life of the country, acknowledging their potential. In addition to these government structures, informal structures such as tontines (community, business, or friends) and professional environments (colleagues, customers, and suppliers) support female entrepreneurship in Cameroon. These initiatives are strictly private and benefit from little or no government support.

Based on the above statement, this study aims to investigate how gender discrimination affects corporate performance in Cameroon. The paper also aims to affirm the association between gender equality and corporate performance.

The following are the hypothesis statements of the study:

H1: If gender-based discrimination is resolved, corporate performance improves.

H2: Equal training and funding access for female entrepreneurs can improve corporate performance.

H3: Do female entrepreneurs perform better than male entrepreneurs at an equal level?

Methodology

This study used a descriptive and causal-comparative research design to analyze the effect of gender discrimination on employee performance in selected sectors in Douala, Yaoundé, and Cameroon. A descriptive study was undertaken to explain the variables and their characteristics that affect corporate performance through a questionnaire and econometric analysis.

There are 757 managers from seven (7) selected industries from Doula and Yaoundé purposively chosen to be the study's respondents. These respondents were chosen based on their visibly established enterprises, their imperative registration on the trade and personal property credit register and their registration at the taxation department. Some are members of the enterprises in Cameroon known in French as "*Groupeement International du Cameroun*" (GICAM). Thus, the respondents are sufficiently representative. The industries are brewery, arts, and craft; livestock and fishery; General Merchandise; banking, microfinance, and insurance; Hair salon and fashion; and Leisure and Tourism.

The causal-comparative design examines the potential causes for observed differences among existing groups (Fulmer, 2018) and determines whether the independent variable affects the dependent variable (Jason & Rumrill, 2004). The cause-and-effect relationship between this study's dependent and independent variables was analyzed using causal analysis.

Data from Kiva and USAID on global gender lens investing were utilized to verify the first hypothesis (H1: if gender discrimination is resolved, corporate performance can improve) and the second hypothesis (H2: equal access to female entrepreneur training and funding can improve corporate performance).

The analytical approach inspired by the works of William H. Greene and F & D, while taking into consideration the context of sub-Saharan Africa (Cameroon), was adopted to verify the first hypothesis (H1: If gender-based discrimination is resolved, then corporate performance will improve) Moreover, the second hypothesis (H2 equal access to training and funding of female entrepreneurs can enhance corporate version). However, this approach does not make it easy to affirm with certainty that gender equality is the cause of the company's positive performance; it only makes it possible to establish a clear link between the feminization of the company and its performance.

A total of 757 managers from seven (7) selected industries from Douala and Yaoundé were chosen as the study's respondents. These respondents were chosen based on their visibly established enterprises, imperative registration on the trade and personal property credit register, and registration in the taxation department. Some are members of enterprises in Cameroon known in French as "*Groupeement International du Cameroun*" (GICAM). Thus, the respondents were sufficiently representative. The industries are brewery, arts, craft, livestock and fishery, General Merchandise, banking, microfinance, insurance, hair salons, fashion, and Leisure and Tourism.

The data presented in this work were derived from research inquiries conducted in Douala and Yaoundé of the Republic of Cameroon from March 6 to March 23, 2023. According to the general Census of Enterprises (R.G.E.) conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (I.N.S.) in 2009, more than 60% of the total number of enterprises in Cameroon are found in Douala and Yaoundé. These two cities are the political capital (Yaoundé) and the economic capital (Douala) of Cameroon. This figure provides a consequential image of the financial presentations of enterprises in Cameroon. It also provides an idea of the demographic presentation of the country, with these two cities having a population of over 9 million or approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the country's

total population (about 25 million). We interviewed 757 enterprises in different sectors and industries in the country. Our objective was based on the budget and time required to conduct this study. According to data from the National Statistics Institute, approximately 35.1% of enterprises are in Douala and 23.9% in Yaoundé.

Table 1.0

Respondents Population

Industry/subsector	Douala	Yaoundé	Total
Brewery	51	40	91
Arts & craft	75	40	115
Livestock & fishery	30	10	40
General Merchandising	150	115	265
Banking, microfinance & Insurance	15	10	25
Hair salon & fashion	60	55	115
Leisure & tourism	46	60	106

Results and Discussion

The data were processed using frequency statistics, and thematic analysis was employed to identify the relationship between gender equality and corporate performance. The models are the most appropriate for use because they perfectly link various economic variables to each other. This model provides a formal approach to estimating how a change in the explanatory variable affects the explained variable, the dependent variable, considering the Impact of all other determinants of the dependent variable linear regression model for the variables in this study as defined.

$$Y = \alpha X + \varepsilon$$

Y= independent variable (business performance)

X= vector of the dependent variable (gender inequality)

α = vector associated with the parameter to estimate

ε = error margin or residue

The following equation specifies the basic econometric model presented above.

$$y_f = \pi + \alpha x_f + \alpha VF + \varepsilon$$

y_f = Profit margins and returns on investments represent business performance variables.

αx_f = Exponential variable of sex gender discrimination of females.

$\alpha V.F.$ Vector of fixed or control variables.

ε = error terms.

The variables' measures are mentioned above and explained in detail below. See the section devoted to explaining or describing this study's variables.

The 3rd hypothesis (H3: Turnover between men-owned businesses and women-owned businesses shows successful growth when comparing companies of similar sizes) can be verified by adopting Robert W. Fairlie and Alicia M. Robb (2008) and Essus et al. (2018) to explain the performance gap between female- and male-owned businesses of similar sizes in the Cameroonian context. The standard blinder Oaxaca decomposition is used with the marginal effect from the logit specifications for closure, profitability, and employability coefficients for linear log sales specifications. These methods can be criticized for their lack of preference and the impossibility of establishing a coherent relationship between the standards and nature of average-based analysis. However, the technique produces very robust results that favor its wide use in exploring certain factors to explain inequalities related to wages, employment, and productivity, as well as the production gap between men and women in the labor market (Oaxaca, 1973; Fortin, 2011)

Therefore, the researcher can estimate the performance matrix of female-owned businesses as follows:

$$(x + a)^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} x^k a^{n-k}$$

$$Y = \beta + \sum_{j=1}^j \beta \times + \epsilon$$

Y= log of business performance held by women

β = Vector of the coefficient to be estimated.

X= matrix of the explanatory or independent variable restrained in the model specifications

ϵ = error term

3.4 Description of variables

3.4.1 Response or Dependent Variable.

Business performance is the dependent variable in this study. Business performance is usually measured using indicators such as return on assets (ROA), return on equity (R.O.E.), return on sales (R.O.S.), profit margin, revenue, and revenue others (Kim et al., 2020).

The key performance indicators gauge a company's overall long-term performance. They help determine strategic, financial, and operational achievements compared with businesses of the same size and sector. Large companies' performance indicators are often measured regarding return on investment, profit margins, and revenue.

Return on assets (ROA), return on equity (R.O.E.), and return on sales (R.O.S.) are criticized because they present the performance of the past, which is somehow good if the present concerns, such as profit margin, return on investments, revenue, growth in turnover, and employment as short-term and long-term performance. These performance indicators are easy to obtain and facilitate accessibility of business performance information. These variables are considered objective performance indicators (Delmar, 1997), and they are also regarded as indicators of entrepreneurial success, according to Dunkelberge and Cooper (1982). The data presented in this study provides information on the profit margin, return on investments, employee growth, and annual turnover. A business with temporary part-time or seasonal jobs was challenging to differentiate from this study because of its economic level. Difficulties accessing information on employees, annual sales, and total assets seem complicated due to tax evasion; companies keep this information confidential and secret.

Accessing this information was impossible because it cannot be found online and can only be obtained from the financial departments of various companies. Due to complicated tax policies, companies and businesses keep this information secret to avoid increased taxes. It becomes difficult to calculate the performance measures of most companies with certainty. Due to administrative tolerance and a lack of transparency in the archives of social security funds, it is difficult to know the exact number of employees in companies/businesses.

3.4.2 Explanatory or Independent Variables

The main aim of this work is women's participation and its Impact on business performance in Cameroon. In other words, we examine the Impact of gender discrimination on corporate performance. The analysis can be observed at various levels: the significant elements of discrimination, the effects of these discriminations on performance, and the gap between male- and female-owned businesses. Differences exist between people's behaviors, and how these behaviors affect business performance remains an object of debate. Social science considers gender differences in behavior as a vector of collective business success and can favor access to career evolution and acquisition of experience (Del Giudice, 2015). Access to credit and training are the variables that indicate whether credit is obtained to fund the business and whether the employee or the management has the required training. The indicator of a company that benefited from credit could be 1, and 0 for those that did not. Unlike male-owned businesses, female-owned businesses usually face difficulties obtaining credit from institutions during their startup, survival, and growth stages. Due to these difficulties, examining the variables concerning self-financing companies using the owners' funds is imperative. The employees' and management's training and skills are independent of this study, as they constitute an element of discrimination.

The physical presence of women is essential for business performance because of the difference in behavior between women and men, which is visible and has been an object of debate in the social sciences. Most social science studies have established that the differences in behavior between women and men are significant vectors for collective success in an organization. In this study, the presence of women was an essential aspect of business. Certain feminine qualities

could also influence a company's collective performance. This feminine quality has been considered in several studies to contribute to women's teamwork performance, which is one of the essential aspects of company performance. These feminine qualities can be a leg for those who think gender equality could impact corporate performance. The education and funding of female entrepreneurs in Cameroon could boost the economy's emergence.

The variables of the workers' and management's training and skills are independent of this study, as they constitute discrimination.

3.4.3 Fixed or control variables

The control variable was something held constant. This section tries to identify and explain the fixed variables used in this study. In the context of Cameroon, gender discrimination and business performance could have several selected or control variables, such as professional experience, age of the company, political policy, registration, and others.

According to the human capital theory, resources and skills are essential for business performance. Professional experience of management and workers is an important variable in this study; the accumulation of experience and knowledge by management and employees is essential for the company's performance. The works of (Westphal and Zajac, 1995, and Terjesen et al. 2008) opine that women can accumulate valuable experience as managers of small and medium-sized enterprises. Knowledge and understanding of the employee and the manager, especially participation in performance, are usually measured by annual profit margin, company sales growth, and others. Increasing the professional experience and knowledge of the executive leads to improved performance.

Another fixed variable is the age of the business, which is the time the industry has been operating. The company's age is an essential variable in business performance (M'hamid et al., 2011).

Business size was also a variable that should be considered in this study. The number of employees measures a company's operating capital and financial capacity. The feminine quality of accountability places women in an advantageous position to run and manage large companies.

Big companies rely on responsibility for better performance. Companies in some sectors require more guilt than others do.

Thus, the sector in which the business operates is a valuable fixed variable that can affect performance. The significant rise in women and girls' involvement in the corporate world in Cameroon over the past few years is a testament to the government's proactive measures and the emergence of rights groups. These entities have been instrumental in raising awareness about the crucial role of women and girls in the country's economic growth.

The age of a business is a crucial fixed variable that warrants investigation when analyzing a company's performance. This factor can provide valuable insights into the company's growth trajectory and potential for success.

The official registration of the company, losses due to theft, investment in security, power outage, possession of an electricity generator, and advice on the management of activities are all dichotomous control variables used in this analysis.

Discussion

Profile of Respondents

There were 450 enterprises owned or managed by men and 307 enterprises owned and controlled by women. The ages ranged from 17 to 60 for men and between 16 and 62 for women, with a total of 757, commonly 51.5% single and 27% married.

In Cameroon, traditional African marriages are the predominant mode of marriage. Most marriages in Cameroon are not registered in the civil status registry and are thus considered free unions. This is because of the cumbersome procedure for registering marriages in the civil status registry. However, the government occasionally organizes collective marriages to encourage free unions to register their marriages. It explains The marital status of the respondents figured in question 3 of the questionnaire, with the respondents having to choose whether they were single (120 respondents), married (205 respondents), divorced (42 respondents), widowers (0 respondents), or free union (390 respondents).

Respondents' educational attainment was 28%, and they had the highest diploma. Due to the stereotypical nature of Cameroonian society, women and girls do not have access to education as

their male counterparts do. The research reveals that most interviewees have yet to reach their education level, as most have just gone through primary school. Two thousand ten of those interviewed had no level of education: 167 went through elementary school, 188 went through middle school, ninety-eight through high school, and 94 went through higher education. A business's performance and operating mode would be much better with formal education. Most women in Cameroon companies serve as a workforce, and their recruitment is based on tribal lineage, sociological acquaintances, and family ties. Education and training are usually minor priorities when working in or managing a business in Cameroon. The data indicate that the business owner or manager has acquired complementary training. The results revealed that none (0%) of those interviewed had acquired professional training. In comparison, 230 (31%) had apprenticeship training or apprentices in the enterprises where they worked, and 25 (3%) had formal training in secretarial, electricity, engineering, and others. In comparison, 502 (66%) samples did not undergo training.

Degree of interference of the family in the enterprise.

The Degree to which family members interfere in the enterprise can be seen in multiple ways, either by financing, which is usually not the case or by dependence upon the business as a source of support (Qiu & Freel, 2019). This indicator affects men as they are usually the breadwinner of their families. Families depend on the business's profits for their livelihood, making it difficult for owners to plow back profits, thereby increasing performance. In most cases, women are more likely to push back profits, making their performance higher than their male counterparts.

Impact of environment on performance

The environment here refers to extended families, friends, neighbors, and the community in which they operate. Some settings have a positive impact on performance, whereas others harm it. Those working in a vulnerable and underprivileged environment turn to conducting more

corporate social responsibilities and spending more money on charity and social activities without profit. In contrast, middle—or upper-class people pay less for social activities and plow back profits.

Zone inquiry

This indicates the geographical zone in which the interviews were conducted. The areas of inquiry in this study were Douala and Yaoundé. According to data from the 2006 general census of enterprises, these two cities constituted approximately 60% of the total number of registered enterprises in Cameroon. Yaoundé is Cameroon's political capital, while Douala is Cameroon's economic capital.

Subsector

It is part of a more significant sector, a branch of the industry. For example, the general merchandising sector may consist of retailers specializing in selling different items, such as groceries, furniture, and other commodities.

Employee Apprentice

The questionnaire survey indicated that most of the enterprises interviewed operated in the fields of brewery, arts and craft, livestock and fishery, general merchandising, banking and finance, hair salons, fashion, leisure, and tourism—employee apprenticeship, which is the process of acquiring acquisition valuable experience in a particular domain to gain expertise. Most of the sectors of the Cameroonian economy require practical knowledge and expertise to be able to perform. Employees must undergo apprenticeships in industries such as hair salons. In this situation, the employee must sometimes pay the employer for training in banking and finance, tourism, leisure, insurance, brewery, and other related industries. The employer benefits by equipping the employee with the necessary skills to perform, sponsoring the employee's apprenticeship, and making it easier to acquire the skills. Women are often excluded from internships in the enterprises mentioned above because of family constraints and maternity

holidays; meanwhile, they are the dominant apprentices in enterprises where apprenticeship is paid.

This affirmation can be verified in the study of informal vocational training and sustainable livelihood skills among unemployed youth in low-income countries: insights from a SWOT analysis of tailoring apprenticeships in Cameroon by Ijang Bih Ngyah and Etta Mercy Aki.

Access to Bank Loans.

This question aims to determine the frequency with which enterprises go for bank loans and how accessible these loans are to enterprises. The most common conditions for obtaining a bank loan in Cameroon are providing collateral or having a guarantor ("shorter"). Valuable collateral securities for bank loans are landed and have movable properties, e.g., cars. Women need more access to land properties, making it extremely difficult to obtain independent bank loans. Thus, they require approval from their husbands, who are loan guarantors. Unmarried women are required to bring a family member or relative with stable employment, and, in most cases, the bank will require the guarantor's salary to pass through their bank for the duration of the loan. Obtaining bank loans is cumbersome for female entrepreneurs, especially startups. Sometimes, bank loans for small and medium-sized enterprises do not excite 12 monthly installments.

In very few cases, startups or enterprises receive funding from non-governmental organizations, goodwill individuals, and charity organizations. These findings are usually scarce and apply to enterprises in the agricultural sector. In sporadic cases, enterprises attempting to go bankrupt can benefit from this funding. Related studies on this effect could examine credit access in Cameroon and diaspora investors' access to bank credit in Cameroon.

Client's accessibility behavior

This question aims to determine the enterprise's accessibility to clients or potential clients. It seeks to determine how the position of the business location influences the performance. Certain enterprises, like the tourism and leisure industries, do not have problems establishing their enterprises. What is of prime importance to them is the advertisement and quality of services

they offer; meanwhile, in other sectors such as general merchandising, location, and accessibility are very important because regardless of the quality of the product and service provided, if the business location is not accessible to clients, potential clients will not come.

Table of correlation between the presence of women workforce and management/ownership and performance.

Table 2.0

Correlation between the presence of women workforce and management/ownership and performance.

Performance Indicators	Workforce		Manager/ Owner	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Return on assets (ROA).	200/307	239/450	188/307	300/450
Return on sales (R.O.S.).	200/307	239/450	188/307	300/450
Return on equity (R.O.E.).	200/307	239/450	188/307	300/450
Profit margin.	0	0	0	0
Funding.	0	0	87/307	450/450
Complementary training	169/757	437/757	106/307	317/450

Data analysis and performance indices (P.I.) presentation per company category.

This part of the study compares companies/businesses owned by women and men in selected sectors in which data were collected. The sectors chosen were general merchandising and distribution, arts and crafts, and tourism and leisure.

The data demonstrate that these sectors were selected based on their popularity in Cameroonian society: general merchandising and distribution (265 samples), arts and crafts (115 models), and tourism and leisure (106 pieces).

The table below shows the comparison, with sex and performance indices (second.) as the main variables and classified from first to fourth. The first category represents $one \leq PI \leq 1.5$, 2nd category $1.5 \leq PI \leq 2$, 3rd category, $2 \leq PI \leq 2.5$, 4th category, $2.5 \leq PI \leq 3$. The various categories of performance indices are based on return on assets, equity, sales, and profit margins. The profit margin is the most common indicator measured in finance. Employee growth and stock markets are also indicators of interest. Due to difficulties evaluating other growth aspects, we emphasize the profit margin in financial terms. Category 1 enterprises have a profit margin between USD 2000 and USD 3000. By contrast, category two enterprises have a profit margin between USD 3000 and USD 4000. Category 3 enterprises have a profit margin between USD 4000 to USD 5000, and Category 4 enterprises have a profit margin between USD 5000 to USD 6000. The sex remained male and female, while the performance indices were evaluated on a scale from 1 to 3. The tables are presented in Tables 1 and 2,3,4, with Table 4 demonstrating the percentage of the general data collected and Table 1,2,3 representing the selected sectors' data.

Table of Sex Variables and Performance Indices per category in the Distribution and General Commerce industry.

Table 3

General Merchandising/performance indices (P.I.) 265 samples

		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Total
Sex	Male	0.0	34	85	12	131
	Female	0.0	51	75	8	134
Total		0.0	109	136	20	265

The above table indicates that of the 265 enterprises interviewed, none made a profit, as shown by the monthly performance indices of USD 2000 to USD 3000. Thus, 0.0%. This observation could explain why general merchandising requires enormous capital to run businesses and operate efficiently in this sector. The targets in this sector were enterprises registered in the trade and registry. That access provided essential information on return on sales,

assets, equity, and other factors. This can be easily obtained. The figures were obtained by finding the percentage of each category from the total number of male and female-owned/managed enterprises in the performance category, as shown in the table above. On the other hand, there were 34 male-owned or managed enterprises for the second category, 85 for the third category, and 12 for the fourth category. On the other hand, the female-owned or ordered enterprises for the second category, seventy-five for the third category, and 8 for the fourth category, which makes a total of 134 enterprises in this sector managed by women against 131 operated by men.

Table 4.0

Performance indices per category for Arts and crafts, 115 samples

		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Total
Sex	Male	17	24	49	0	52
	Female	8	40	15	0	63
Total		25	64	26	0	115

The total number of enterprises interviewed in the arts and craft sector was 115, 52 of which were managed/owned by men, while sixty-three were held/managed by females. None of the enterprises in this sector made a monthly profit margin of USD 5000. For this sector's male-owned or managed enterprises, Category 1 had 17 enterprises, Category 2 had 24, and Category 3 had 49 enterprises. On the other hand, for female-owned or managed enterprises, the first category had eight enterprises, the second had 40, and the 3rd 15, making 63 enterprises owned/operated by females.

Table 5.

Performance indices per category for the tourism and leisure industry (106 samples).

		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Total
Sex	Male	3	16	33	3	55
	Female	3	20	23	5	51
Total		6	36	56	8	106

The above figures are obtained by calculating the sum of each variable's sex and performance indices from the indicated sector or industry from the data collected. A simple addition of the total will give 100%. The calculations were performed to minimize the error margin.

A table of the performance indices of the total number of questionnaires collected in the field shows the overall performance of the companies or enterprises concerning the gender of the owner or manager. For the first category, there is a relative increase in the performance of male-owned/managed companies. However, as the class increases, we observe a rapid change in business performance, favoring female-owned/operated businesses. This indicates that if female-owned businesses are funded or have access to funding and adequate training, they can perform better. With limited training and lack of access to funding, female-owned/managed businesses of comparable size to male-owned/managed businesses still stand out, irrespective of the numerous discriminations they face. The table below demonstrates the performance indices per category of the questionnaires and data collected in the field.

The results could contribute to global awareness of women's important roles in company performance. The data can be used as evidence for a more significant effort to employ women in any industry and give them a chance to represent the workplace as able and competent. American Psychological Association mentioned that women's presence inspires increased productivity and enhanced collaboration. As a result, it presents the progress of gender equality; it is a manifestation that the call of SDG 5 objectives is somehow achieved.

Table 6.*General performance indices of the questionnaires studied (757 samples)*

		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Sex	Male	1.7%	34.5%	54.8%	9.0%
	Female	1.0%	26.2%	57.1%	15.7%
Total		1.4%	31.0%	55.8%	11.8%

The study has an important role in empowering and encouraging more women to help achieve greater equality. More so, it implies improving the access to training and funding of women, girls, and female entrepreneurs to equip them with the necessary skills to improve their performance. Hence, it could reduce the stereotype and macho mindset that makes men uncomfortable working under women's management. Lastly, the institutions could improve women's accessibility to funding and complementary training by providing scholarships and seminars to help enhance the performance of women-owned/managed enterprises.

The realization of this work presented some limits that are worth considering. The constitution of the sample questionnaire constitutes a significant weakness in this study. A total of 757 sampled questionnaires were interviewed in Yaoundé and Douala, thereby reducing the scope of the work and assuming that the realities of businesses in these two cities are the realities of companies in the rest of the country. Thus, the results of the cities were transposed to the rest of the country.

The limit in this study relates to the fact that small and medium-sized businesses constitute most of the data collected. Small businesses that employ less than 5 persons make up most of the data in this work and constitute a reasonable percentage of enterprises in Cameroon. The exclusion of some sectors reduces the sample and the analyses of the correlation between women and business performance. This is because Cameroon is a consuming economy with a deficient production capacity, which reduces the establishment of companies. Like other developing countries, most companies in Cameroon are either totally or partially owned by the government, reducing the scope of this work.

Summary of findings

According to this study's findings, businesses with a higher proportion of women in the workforce perform relatively better in the sectors where they can operate. Therefore, women will do better if they are offered an equitable environment.

The findings also prove that companies with women in management or the head of the board of directors have a better performance gap than their male counterparts.

This study demonstrates a reasonable gap in performance in favor of female-owned businesses. The linear regression method in other studies indicates and confirms this affirmation.

The study proves that the most reliable econometrics model that best relates to this study is the linear regression model. This model best presents the relationship between variables that are inversely proportionate to each other.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Thus, there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the presence of women in the workforce and performance. There is also a positive and meaningful relationship between the presence of women in management positions, board of directors, and company performance. The turnover of businesses owned and managed by women and those owned/operated by men shows successful growth compared to similar companies.

Therefore, this study recommends improving transformational approaches such as scholarship for women, consciousness-raising activities, and intersectional policy for gender and race. Government institutions must provide intensive and legally bound training and funding to equip them with the necessary skills to enhance their performance. The study recommends providing legal action and a basis for promoting women in the workplace. Specifically, equal Government institutions should take the initiative to monitor and control the observance of gender equality at all times.

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Bionote

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